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EXAMINER

JOO, JOSHUA

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**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 10/083,151	<b>Applicant(s)</b> TOYOTA ET AL.	
	<b>Examiner</b> JOSHUA JOO	<b>Art Unit</b> 2454	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 September 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4,6,8-12,14,16-19 and 21-26 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4,6,9-12,14,17-19,21 and 24 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 8,16,22,23,25 and 26 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All    b) ☐ Some \*    c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)            | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)           |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)   | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____                                      |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>9/17/08</u> .   | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                          |

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***Detailed Action***

1. This Office action is in response to the communication filed 09/17/2008.

Claims 1-4, 6, 8-12, 14, 16-19, 21-26 are pending for examination.

**Information Disclosure Statement**

2. The information disclosure statement (IDS) submitted 09/17/2008 is in compliance with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.97. Accordingly, the information disclosure statement is being considered by the Examiner.

**Response to Arguments**

3. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-4, 6, 8-12, 14, 16-19, 21-26 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. New ground(s) of rejection are necessitated by Applicant's amendment.

**Allowable Subject Matter**

4. Claims 8, 16, 22-23, 25-26 objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

**Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112**

5. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

6. Claims 1 and 4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

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- i) Regarding claim 1, “the client terminals” has insufficient antecedent basis.

### **Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103**

7. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

8. Claims 1, 4, 9, 12, and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over a translation of Applicant’s submitted IDS, Katsuya Sakamaki, JP 2000-187631 (Previously cited, Sakamaki hereinafter), in view of Adams et al. US Patent #6,898,636 (Adams hereinafter).

9. As per claims 1, 9, and 17, Sakamaki teaches substantially the invention as claimed including a community-based collaborative knowledge system which can be connected to a client terminal via a network, and which supports knowledge accumulation by categorizing and accumulating messages posted from the client terminal to a plurality of virtual communities, the plurality of virtual communities comprising at least a first virtual community and a second virtual community, the invention comprising:

access control means for making user authentication of the client terminal so as to permit the client terminal to post a message (Paragraphs 0045-0047. Authentication data, i.e. user id and password. Paragraph 0081. User posts content.);

community processing means for managing the plurality of virtual communities (Paragraphs 0030-0031, 0033. Forum participation and management tables, i.e. forums and participants) and for categorizing and accumulating messages into a plurality of topics (fig. 22; paragraphs 0033; 0071. Comments are posted for specific forum names.), the messages being posted to the plurality of virtual communities from the client terminals (Page 23, paragraph 0083. Posted comment.), the client terminal

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being granted access permission for specified topics by said access control means (fig. 22; page 24, paragraphs 0088-0089. Post/read messages for selected forum. Paragraph 0072. Registration for membership of forum.), said community processing means including:

message subscription type setting means for setting a first subscription type for the first virtual community and a second subscription type for the second virtual community, the first subscription type and the second subscription type each indicating the way a user subscribes to the categorized and accumulated messages in accordance with an instruction from the user (fig. 8. Forum and corresponding releasing format. Paragraphs 0074-0075. Releasing format of "mail format" or "web format").,

the first subscription type comprising browsing by a web browser for the first virtual community, and the second subscription type comprising using an email client for the second virtual community (fig. 8; Paragraphs 0031-0032; 0075. Registered user. Forums and corresponding release formats, either "e-mail format" or "web format")., the second subscription type allowing a user to post a reply to the second virtual community by replying to a delivered email message containing a new posting (Paragraph 0075; 0084. For "mail format", a posted comment is sent as email. Paragraph 0081-0082. User posts to a forum. It is implied that a user may post to a forum in reply to receiving the email via the "mail format" registration.); and

a processor for implementing at least the message subscription type setting means (Paragraph 0019; 0024. Processor.).

10. Sakamaki teaches of replying to a deliver email message but not specifically by using the email client.

11. Adams teaches of receiving e-mail messages and using an email client to send e-mail messages that are posted to a virtual community (col. 21, lines 35-52. E-mail message(s) sent by subscriber are posted to a forum.)

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12. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings to use an email client to post messages on a virtual community as taught by Adams. The motivation for the suggested combination is that Adam's would improve Sakamaki's teachings by achieving a predictable result of enabling subscribers to conveniently view and post messages on a forum using an email client as taught by Adams.

13. As per claims 4 and 12, Sakamaki teaches the invention according to claims 1 and 9, wherein said message subscription type setting means set a subscription type of each user for each individual virtual community (fig. 21; paragraph 0074-0075. Registration of forum comprises selecting a subscription type.).

14. Claims 2-3, 10-11, and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakamaki, in view of Guheen, US Patent #6,519,571 (Guheen hereinafter) and Adams.

15. As per claims 2, 10, and 18, Sakamaki teaches substantially the invention as claimed including a community-based collaborative knowledge system which can be connected to a client terminal via a network, and which supports knowledge accumulation by categorizing and accumulating messages posted from the client terminal to a plurality of virtual communities, the plurality of virtual communities comprising at least a first virtual community and a second virtual community, the invention comprising:

access control means for making user authentication of the client terminal so as to permit the client terminal to post a message (Paragraphs 0045-0047. Authentication data, i.e. user id and password. Paragraph 0081. User posts content.); and

community processing means for managing the plurality of virtual communities (Paragraphs 0030-0031, 0033. Forum participation and management tables, i.e. forums and participants), and for categorizing and accumulating messages into a plurality of topics (fig. 22; paragraphs 0033; 0071.

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Comments are posted for forum names.), the messages being posted to the plurality of virtual communities from the client terminal, the client terminal being granted access permission for specified topics by said access control means (fig. 22; page 24, paragraphs 0088-0089. Post/read messages for selected forum. Paragraphs 0072; 0098. Registration for membership of forum.), said community processing means including:

message subscription type setting means for setting a first subscription type for the first virtual community, the first subscription type indicating the way a user subscribes to the categorized and accumulated messages (Paragraphs 0074-0076. Set releasing format as "mail format" or "web format")., and

display means for displaying a window comprising a list of the first virtual community and the second virtual community (Paragraphs 00071-0072. Display forum list.), the indicating that the first subscription type is browsing by a web browser for the first virtual community, and indicates a second subscription type is using an email client for the second virtual community (fig. 8; Paragraphs 0031-0032. Registered user. Forums and corresponding release formats, either e-mail or web.), the second subscription type allowing a user to post a reply to the second virtual community by replying to a delivered email message containing a new posting (Paragraph 0075; 0084. For "mail format", a posted comment is sent as email. Paragraphs 0081-0082; 0099. User posts a reply to a forum. It is implied that a user may post to a forum regarding the posted comment in reply to receiving the email.);

a processor for implementing at least the message subscription type setting means (Paragraph 0019; 0024. Processor.).

16. Sakamaki teaches of replying to a deliver email message but not specifically by using the email client. Sakamaki also does not specifically of setting the first subscription type in accordance with an instruction from a predetermined administrator and the displayed window indicating the first subscription type and second subscription type.

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17. Guheen teaches a system for management of user profiles, wherein an administrator may moderate user membership in forums and an user or administrator may modify user profiles/preferences (col. 207, lines 40-61; col. 210, lines 31-45; col. 261, lines 41-48).

18. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings for an administrator to modify user profile/preference and manage user membership of forums as taught by Guheen such that the subscription type as taught by Sakamaki is set by the administrator. It would have been also obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art combine the teachings for an administrator to view user profile/preference as taught by Guheen such that the first subscription type and second subscription as taught by Sakamaki are viewable by the administrator or a user. The motivation for the suggested combination is that Guheen's teachings would provide an improvement to Sakamaki's teachings by allowing moderation of access to forums and allow an administrator or user to manage user information.

19. Sakamaki and Guheen still do not specifically using the email client.

20. Adams teaches receiving e-mail messages and using an email client to send e-mail messages that are posted to a virtual community (col. 21, lines 35-52. E-mail message(s) are posted to a forum.)

21. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings to use an email client to post messages on a virtual community as taught by Adams. The motivation for the suggested combination is that Adam's would improve the suggested system by achieving a predictable result of enabling subscribers to conveniently view and post messages on a forum using an email client as taught by Adams.

22. As per claims 3 and 11, Sakamaki does not specifically teach the invention according to claims 2 and 10, wherein the administrator is determined for each individual virtual community.



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23. Guheen teaches a system for management of user profiles, wherein an administrator is determined for a virtual community (col. 207, lines 40-61; col. 210, lines 31-45; col. 261, lines 41-48. An administrator moderates forums.).

24. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings to determine an administrator for each individual virtual community. The motivation for the suggested combination is that Guheen's teachings would improve the suggested system by allowing regulation and management of forums.

25. Claims 6, 14, 19, 21, and 24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakamaki, in view of Kakuta, US Patent #6,630,944 (Kakuta hereinafter) and Smith, US Patent #6,594,673 (Smith hereinafter).

26. As per claims 6, 14, and 19, Sakamaki teaches substantially the invention as claimed including a community-based collaborative knowledge system which can be connected to a client terminal via a network, and supports knowledge accumulation by categorizing and accumulating messages posted from the client terminal to a plurality of virtual communities, the plurality of virtual communities comprising at least a first virtual community and a second virtual community, the invention comprising:

access control means for making user authentication of the client terminal so as to permit the client terminal to post a message (Paragraphs 0045-0047. Authentication data, i.e. user id and password. Paragraph 0081. User posts content.);

message subscription type setting means for setting a first subscription type for the first virtual community, the first subscription type indicating the way a user subscribes to the categorized and accumulated messages in accordance with an instruction from the user (Paragraphs 0074-0076. Set releasing format as "mail format" or "web format".); and

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community processing means for managing the plurality of virtual communities (Paragraphs 0030-0031, 0033. Forum participation and management tables, i.e. forums and participants), and categorizing and accumulating messages posted, to the plurality of virtual communities, from the client terminal, the client terminal being granted access permission for specified topics by said access control means (fig. 22; page 24, paragraphs 0088-0089. Post/read messages for selected forum. Paragraphs 0072; 0098. Registration for membership of forum.), said community processing means including:

reply message processing means for, when a reply email message used to post a reply message is sent back from the client terminal in response to an email message comprising a header, subject, and a message text, delivering the categorized and accumulated message to a subscriber (Paragraph 00097. Release of posting by e-mail. Paragraphs 0089; 0099-0101. Reply to posted comment.), and categorizing and accumulating the reply message (Paragraph 0101. Associate reply to original contents. Paragraph 0098. Contents under forum title.); and

a processor for implementing at least the message subscription type setting means (Paragraph 0019; 0024. Processor.).

27. Sakamaki does not specifically teach of determining whether or not the header of the reply email message includes an ID. Sakamaki teaches of categorizing and accumulating the reply message but not specifically based on the whether the header of the reply email message includes the ID

28. Kakuta teaches an invention for categorizing and accumulating messages comprising of determining whether or not a message includes an ID and categorizing and accumulating the message based on whether the message includes the ID (col. 6, lines 18-33. Correlate messages according to thread IDs and message IDs. col. 7, lines 25-34; col. 10, lines 6-12. Determine whether thread ID is in the message.).

29. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings for the reply email message as taught by Sakamaki to include an ID and

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determine whether the message includes an ID and categorize and accumulate the message based on whether the message includes the ID as taught by Kakuta. The motivation for the suggested combination is that Kakuta's teachings would improve Sakamaki's teachings by correlating common messages into message groups so that messages may be displayed according to the message group (col. 4, lines 25-27, 45-47).

30. Sakamaki and Kakuta teach of the ID but not specifically in the header of the email message.

31. Smith teaches a system for collaborative information, wherein a header of a posting comprises ID(s) that is analyzed for routing and categorization (col. 7, lines 34-46).

32. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings for the ID as taught by Sakamaki and Kakuta to be implemented in a header that is analyzed for categorization of postings as taught by Smith. The motivation for the suggested combination is that Smith's teachings would improve the suggested system by enabling efficient lookup of identifiers and providing designated fields for categorizing messages. Furthermore, Smith's teachings would improve the suggested system by providing improved visualizations of relationships in collaborative information relating to bulletins boards (col. 2, lines 10-18).

33. As per claims 21 and 24, Sakamaki does not specifically teach the invention according to claims 6 and 14, wherein the ID comprises a message ID and a thread ID.

34. Kakuta teaches an invention for categorizing and accumulating messages, wherein an ID comprises a message ID and a thread ID (col. 6, lines 18-33. Message ID and thread ID).

35. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the teachings for the ID to comprise a message ID and thread ID. The motivation for the suggested combination is that Kakuta's teachings would improve the suggested system by correlating

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common messages into message groups so that messages may be displayed according to the message group (col. 4, lines 25-27, 45-47).

### **Conclusion**

36. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

37. A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

38. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joshua Joo whose telephone number is 571 272-3966. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday 7 to 4.

39. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nathan J. Flynn can be reached on 571 272-1915. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

40. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained

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from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

/J. J./

Examiner, Art Unit 2454

/Nathan J. Flynn/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2454